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Pentagon Says Slain Adviser Was Sole American on Salvador Base

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WASHINGTON, March 31 — The Defense Department said today that the American military adviser killed on the El Paraiso base when it was attacked early this morning by a leftist guerrilla force was the only American on the base.

The Pentagon identified the adviser as Staff Sgt. Gregory A. Fronius, 27 years old, of Greensburg, Pa., a member of the Army Special Forces.

The Pentagon spokesman, Robert Sims, said that the adviser — called a trainer by the Pentagon — was apparently inside the base compound and was therefore observing the restrictions imposed on the 50 American military advisers now in El Salvador.

"There are general ground rules," Mr. Sims said. "We do not have advisers, trainers, go on land or sea patrol.

We don't have them flying aircraft on combat missions. They normally avoid situations where combat is likely. They are stationed, for the most part, in the capital city of San Salvador and certain other garrisons, such as this one, which was a major regional command post."

Advisers Limited to 55

The slain adviser was part of a two-member team, Mr. Sims said. His colleague was not on the base and was not hurt.

The Pentagon has limited to 55 the number of military advisers in El Salvador, although the ranks are increased by sending additional people on temporary duty.

A Pentagon official denied that the adviser who was killed had any connection with the Central Intelligence Agency, which has been funneling aid

through El Salvador to the Nicaraguan rebels known as the contras.

The adviser, the official said, was a member of the armed services and part of a military group that reports to the United States Ambassador, not to the C.I.A.

The advisory team is part of an American effort to help the Salvadoran Army resist the guerrilla forces. The United States has provided \$2 billion in economic and military aid, and trains troops in marksmanship, weapons use and equipment maintenance. Larger, tactical questions are addressed at higher levels, the official said.

Anxiety in Congress

There was no reaction from the White House or the State Department, and members of Congress were generally reluctant to make any immediate comment.

A spokesman for Senator Claiborne Pell, a Rhode Island Democrat and the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the Senator was waiting for more information.

Many members of Congress have expressed anxiety that in sending military advisers to Central America the United States is entering a quagmire similar to Vietnam. The initial American involvement in Vietnam, in the late 1950's early 60's, came in the form of military advisers to the South Vietnamese Army and grew eventually to a ground force of some 500,000 men at its peak.

The Reagan Administration has insisted that it has no intention of sending combat troops to the region, and that it has concentrated in El Salvador on building up the Salvadoran forces with

equipment and training.

The adviser was the first killed in a combat situation, although five other American military men have died in El Salvador since 1983. In May 1983, Lieut. Comdr. Albert Schaufelberger of the Navy was killed by a gunman on the campus of the University of Central America in San Salvador. Four off-duty United States marines were killed in an attack on a cafe in June 1985.

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